DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 040 120 95 SO 000 108

AUTHOR Gorden, Raymond L.
TITLE Cross-Cultural Encounter In A Latin American Bank.
INSTITUTION Antioch Coll., Yellow Springs, Ohio.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.; Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Inst. of International Studies.
BUREAU NO BR-7-0267
PUB DATE Apr 70
GRANT OEG-1-7-070267-3973
NOTE 52p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$2.70
DESCRIPTORS Audiovisual Programs, *Communication (Thought Transfer), *Cross Cultural Training, Cultural Context, Cultural Differences, *Cultural Interrelationships, Discussion (Teaching Technique), Foreign Relations, Inductive Methods, *Instructional Materials, Interaction Process Analysis, *Latin American Culture, Nonverbal Communication, Self Evaluation, Social Studies Units, Sociocultural Patterns
IDENTIFIERS CCCP, *Cross-Cultural Communication Packet

ABSTRACT

This unit is one of a series of cross-cultural mini-dramas, and is offered as the prototype audio-visual unit of the Cross-Cultural Communication Packet (CCCP). The objective is to provide insight into the process of cross-cultural communication, and to develop observation skills, or to sensitize the student to concepts which will help him to recognize the symptoms of miscommunication (ethnocentrism, culture shock, empathy, dissonant cultural premises). Specific experiences in a concrete situation are linked to these basic abstract concepts by the mini-drama. It has North American characters with whom the listener can identify. This presentation and group discussion are a part of a process of self-confrontation. Next, a tape-recorded slide-lecture concentrates on explaining the events and logically connecting them with a theoretical model of socio-cultural patterns and interaction processes, both verbal and non-verbal. Here, the arts of asking questions and listening objectively are considered vital. A text is included that can be used as either a pre-test or post-test to evaluate instructional effectiveness. The source of these materials is the subject data gathered in the original research project, which is reviewed in SO 000 107, ED 023 337, ED 023 338, ED 023 339. (SBE)

ED0 40120

CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER IN A LATIN AMERICAN BANK

SO 000 108

These materials are based upon research done in Colombia under contract #1-7-070267-3973 between Antioch College (administrative agent for the Latin American Program of the Great Lakes Colleges Association) and the U. S. Office of Education in cooperation with CEUCA (Centro de Estudios Universitarios Colombo-Americano) which is the GLCA Center in Bogota.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. MINI-DRAMA SCRIPT. 1

Scene 1. 3
Scene 2. 6
Scene 3. 7
Scene 4. 9
Scene 5. 11

II. DISCUSSION LEADER'S GUIDE. 13

Objectives 14
General Strategy 16
Scene 1. 19
Scene 2. 21
Scene 3. 22
Scenes 4 and 5 23

III. SLIDE-LECTURE SCRIPT 24

IV. TEST 42

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

A Sample Cross-Cultural Communication Packet

CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER IN A LATIN AMERICAN BANK

Raymond L. Gorden
Cross-Cultural Research
Antioch College
Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387
Tel: 513-767-7331

Introduction

(For the Instructor Only)

Each CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PACKET consists of four parts:

1. Tape-recorded MINI-DRAMA with sound effects,
2. DISCUSSION GUIDE for each of the scenes of the MINI-DRAMA,
3. TAPE-SLIDE LECTURE which explains and generalizes,
4. POST-TEST to determine the listeners' understanding.

The learner should listen to the MINI-DRAMA without any prior instructions except for an introductory remark which avoids suggesting whether the MINI-DRAMA does or does not illustrate communication barriers or problems. For example:

> "This Cross-Cultural Mini-Drama illustrates a common type of practical interaction between North Americans and Latin Americans which happens to take place in Bogota, Colombia. It is all in English, but you can readily distinguish the Colombians who speak with a Spanish accent. Listen carefully to see what is going on!"

The narrator in the MINI-DRAMA tells when to interrupt the tape after each scene to allow discussion of the interaction up to that point.

The DISCUSSION GUIDE suggests a general strategy and specific questions to be used to avoid either suggesting answers or showing disapproval of any of the judgments made by the members of the group. The idea is to allow the group discussion itself to demonstrate how the members have difficulty in detecting or solving the problem because they share the same non-linguistic barriers which blocked communication between the North Americans and Latin Americans in the MINI-DRAMA.

After all of the scenes have been discussed in turn the TAPE-SLIDE LECTURE should be presented to explain (a) how the confusion depicted in the MINI-DRAMA is based upon differences in the expected behavior patterns of bank customers which is a functional part of the differences in the banking institutions of North America and Latin America, and (b) to explain how the MINI-DRAMA is merely one specific case which illustrates a more general theoretical model of cross-cultural communication which applies in a wide variety of interaction situations.

The POST-TEST requires only a few minutes and is actually more a test of the effectiveness of the PACKET than of the student. It may be "self-graded" very quickly since it has no open-ended answers.

PART I - MINI-DRAMA SCRIPT[1]

"Cross-Cultural Encounter in a Latin American Bank"

Scene 1 - Cashing a Check in the Bank.

Scene 2 - Americans on the Way back from the Bank.

Scene 3 - Colombian Interviewing the Bank Teller.

Scene 4 - American Interviewing the Colombian Interviewer.

Scene 5 - Interview Continued.

---

[1]The Trainees should not see this script but hear the tape-recorded MINI-DRAMA one scene at a time with group discussion after each scene.

SCENE 1 - Cashing a Check in the Bank

(A few bars of Latin American music. Fade down under the narrator.)

NARRATOR: This is one of a series of cross-cultural MINI-DRAMAS produced by Antioch College in cooperation with the Great Lakes Colleges Association to illustrate some of the problems of communication between North Americans and Latin Americans. It is entitled "Cross-Cultural Encounter in a Latin American Bank."

(Music fades up for a few bars, then down again as the traffic sounds fade in. A newsboy cries "El Tiempo, El Tiempo". . .then the street sounds fade into the background as the narrator returns.)

NARRATOR: It is a sunny day in Bogota, but at 8,700 feet above sea level, we can marvel at the brilliance of the sun while we shiver in the shade. The afternoon traffic is humming steadily in this South American metropolis as people rush back into the city after siesta time.

The Peace Corps Training Center is just two blocks from one of the principal thoroughfares known as Carrera Septima.

The Peace Corps Trainees always cash their allowance checks at the Banco Comercial across from the Parque Nacional. It looks like one of our most modern banks in the United States. As the Trainees enter the bank, they head for different tellers' windows.

(Music fades up and out, traffic noises fade in. Traffic noises suddenly stop and the quiet rustle and conversation of the bank are heard in the background.)

Jim and Bob are approaching the tellers' window.

BOB: "We made it before they closed."

JIM: "Great, but it will take a while with this crowd!"

BOB: "We'll have to push ahead or we may never get to the window. It looks like the crowd waiting for a bus. There are too many people crammed in here to keep a line."

JIM: "Right! But we'll make it!"

(Sound of a portable radio tuned in to Radio Nacional, including bits of music, commercials and station identification.)

BOB: "What's that?"

JIM: "The girl in the line at the next window has a portable radio under her ruana."

BOB: "I get a bang out of those singing commercials."

JIM: "The first time I cashed a check here I learned that you have to watch or people will crowd in front of you."

BOB: "We're in luck. Here we are already at the head of the line."

JIM: "Buenas tardes, senor!"

TELLER: "Buenas tardes, senor Atkins."

JIM: (Softly to Bob) "I always try to be polite. . .it gives them a chance to get used to my accent."

BOB: (Softly to Jim) "There seems to be something wrong with your check."

TELLER: "Senor Atkins, will you please sign the check?"

JIM: "Si, senor, I'm sorry I forgot." (Pause) "There it is!"

TELLER: "Gracias, senor!" (Sound of stamping the check)

BOB: "I did the same thing last week. I never forgot it in the States. I don't know why I do it here."

JIM: "Same here!"

BOB: (Softly to Jim) "This guy on your right seems to be a little restless. I thought we were supposed to be the impatient ones."

JIM: (Softly to Bob) "Impatient is right. He's elbowing his way ahead! Look, he stuck his check right in front of me and I haven't even gotten my money yet!"

BOB: (Softly) "And he didn't even say pardon me! He must be a friend of the manager. . .see how the teller snapped it up?"

JIM: (To the Colombian) "Senor, are you in a hurry?"

COL: "No, senor, not I, but I thought you were in a hurry since you are still standing in front of the window!"

JIM: "Yes, but I'm still waiting for my money!"

COL: "Yes, I know, but I had to give my check to the teller."

JIM: "But you don't. . ."

BOB: (Interrupting) "The teller's got your money now."

TELLER: "Cien pesos, dos cientos, dos cientos cincuenta, setenta, noventa, tres cientos."

JIM: "Gracias, senor."

BOB: "Let's bug out of here. Joe is already waiting outside."

JIM: "Right! What a rude jerk! He knew damned well that I hadn't gotten my money yet!"

(Music fades in and then down under the narration.)

NARRATOR: While Jim and Bob join their friends on the sidewalk, let's interrupt the story to discuss what has happened up to this point.

(Music fades out completely.)

SCENE 2 - Americans on Their Way Back From the Bank

(Music fades up, then down under the narrator.)

NARRATOR: The Trainees reassembled outside the bank and are walking back to the Training Center as they talk about their experiences inside the bank.

(Music fades out as street sounds fade in.)

BOB: "Wow! That guy was out of this world. He had his own way of getting ahead."

JIM: "Yeah! This is the second time I've been to the bank to cash a check and the same thing happened to me last time. I couldn't believe it at first." (To Joe) "How did you guys do, Joe?"

JOE: "Well, we got our money and that's what counts. I'm not sure it was worth the trouble."

JIM: "You can say that again. Last week when I got to the head of the line at the teller's window, I gave my check to the teller and was standing there minding my own business and waiting for my money when this Colombian sort of nudged me to one side and put his check on the counter right in front of me. I was trying to decide what to do when another guy bumped me from the other side and plunked his check down in front of me. I was getting pretty sore, but I didn't say anything that time!"

JOE: "Today I was lucky. No one pushed in front of me."

JIM: "Well, this guy today was just plain rude. He just didn't want to wait for his turn!"

JOE: "Did he realize that you were still waiting for your money?"

JIM: "Yeah! I wondered about the same thing last week, so this time I got a little bolder and asked him if he was in a hurry or something. I told him that I was waiting for my money and that his turn would come next."

JOE: "Did he say anything to that?"

JIM: "He sure did! He tried to convince me that I had already had my turn. I'm sure that is what he said. Sometimes I wonder whether these Colombians are civilized yet!"

(Street sounds fade out as music fades in under the narrator.)

NARRATOR: Now that we have heard the Trainees sharing their experiences in the bank, let's stop again to analyze what has happened.

(Music fades out completely.)

SCENE 3 - Colombian Interviewing the Bank Teller

(Music fades down under the narrator.)

NARRATOR: Up to this point we have heard only the thoughts of the Americans. We know only what the Colombian said directly to the American. To obtain the Colombian point of view on this same situation, the Cross-Cultural Communication Project sent a Colombian interviewer to question the teller who worked at the window where Jim had cashed his check that afternoon.

(Music fades out and office sounds fade up.)

INT: "Senor Pardo, it is very kind of you to stay and talk to me after the bank has closed. As I explained to the manager, this will not take too long."

TEL: "There is no problem, senora. Please sit down!"

INT: "Gracias, senor. As you know we are studying the problems North Americans have in getting along in Colombia. We want to develop better orientation materials for students, Peace Corps Trainees, and other North Americans who visit Colombia."

TEL: "Si, senora, that's a good idea!"

INT: "How long have you been a teller in this bank?"

TEL: "About three years."

INT: "Have you noticed any North Americans coming to this bank?"

TEL: "Yes. Recently there have been many. We never had any before this Peace Corps group."

INT: "What kind of people are they?"

TEL: "They are all rather young and some have beards, and most of them try to dress like farmers."

INT: "How do they get along as customers in your bank?"

TEL: "They are rude. . .some of them!"

INT: "In what way?"

TEL: "When they come in to cash their checks, some of them are rude!"

INT: "I see. What did they <u>do</u> that was rude?"

TEL: "They hand their check to me and then stand right in front of the window until they get their cash!"

INT: "Yes, I see what you mean! Is there any other way they are rude?"

TEL: "That is the main thing they do and it makes many of the customers angry!"

INT: "Thank you very much. You have been very helpful."

TEL: "I am happy to help. Come with me. I will let you out because the door is locked." (Keys rattle.)

INT: "Gracias, senor."

(Street sounds come in suddenly, then fade down as music comes in and fades under the narrator.)

NARRATOR: Is it clear to you what the problem is? The Colombian interviewer said, "Yes, I see what you mean, senor!" Frankly, I am not sure I know what he meant. Let us pause again to consider what we have learned which will help piece together this cross-cultural puzzle.

(Music fades out completely.)

SCENE 4 - American Interviewing the Colombian Interviewer

(Music fades down under the narrator.)

NARRATOR: When the Director of the research team read the transcript of the interview, he realized that the interview failed to reveal some important information, so he talked with the interviewer.

(Office sounds fade in as music fades out.)

AMER: "Good morning, senora Montoya, how are you?"

COL: "Muy bien, gracias, and how are you and your family?"

AMER: "Very well. . .all of us. You have been doing an excellent job of interviewing. I left the message for you to come by the office so you could help me clarify one of the interviews you did yesterday. Won't you please sit down?"

COL: "Gracia. I hope I can help with the information you want."

AMER: (Rustle papers.) "Ah, here it is! In your interview with the bank teller I don't understand why he thought the customer was rude, the one who stood in front of the teller's window until he got his money."

COL: "Well, maybe that was an exaggeration to call him rude, but he sure wasn't nice."

AMER: "I <u>don't</u> understand what he should have done in order <u>not</u> to be rude."

COL: "He just shouldn't stand there in the way."

AMER: "In whose way?"

COL: "The other customers who want to cash their checks."

AMER: "Just what is the customer here in Bogota <u>supposed</u> to do when he cashes a check?"

COL: "The same as anywhere. . .in Colombia at least."

AMER: "And what is that?"

COL: "Get out of the way so that others can have their turn."

AMER: "But shouldn't they wait until after the first customer has had his turn?"

COL: "Of course, but that is what the teller was saying! The American had already taken his turn!"

(Office sounds fade out and music fades in for few bars then down under the narrator.)

NARRATOR: Let us interrupt this interview to consider the new clues which have been discovered.

(Music fades out completely.)

SCENE 5 - Interview Continued

(Music fades up - then back under the narrator.)

NARRATOR: The American realized that he was not communicating with the Colombian interviewer. The difficulty seemed to revolve around the concept of taking turns at the bank. Let us listen as he probes further into this area.

(Music fades out and office sounds fade in.)

AMER: "Did I understand correctly that the norteamericano still had not received his money when the colombiano put his check through the teller's window?"

COL: "That is correct."

AMER: "Then he didn't have his turn yet, right?"

COL: "That's not right! He already took his turn."

AMER: "He already took his turn?"

COL: "Yes, he already gave his check to the teller."

AMER: "But he hasn't gotten his money!"

COL: "No, because the teller has not called his name yet!"

AMER: "Why should the teller call his name? He just handed him the check with his name on it, and he's still standing right in front of the teller!"

COL: "But, the teller has to wait for the check to be approved before he can cash it and in the meantime, the norteamericano should let the other customers have their turn to give their checks to the teller so that he can send them along for approval."

AMER: "Oh! Then is this the way it works? The customer goes to the window, hands the check to the teller, steps back away from the window so that others can step up and give their checks to the teller, and then when his check is approved for cashing, the teller will call his name."

COL: "Exactly!"

AMER: "Then why form a line?"

COL: "We don't. . .and shouldn't because it would make the system much less efficient!"

(Music fades in and office sounds fade out as the narrator returns.)

NARRATOR: We have heard that "We don't form a line. . .that would be inefficient." That statement completes the information gathered from the people directly involved in the situation. Let's pause to analyze what we have learned from the whole case.

Discussion Leader's Guide

CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER IN A LATIN AMERICAN BANK

Objective: Discovering the Cultural Self

The aim of the Cross-Cultural Communication Packet is to provide INSIGHT into the general PROCESS of cross-cultural communication. The research upon which the Packets are based clearly demonstrated that this insight does not automatically occur to anyone simply because he is interacting with foreigners in situ. Raw experience is not enough. In addition, we must internalize sensitizing concepts which will help us to recognize the symptoms of miscommunication even when we ourselves are involved in the interaction. We must learn that people can be trapped by their own culture-bound thought processes into jumping at incorrect conclusions.

We can also demonstrate that sensitizing intellectual concepts such as "ethnocentrism", "culture shock", "empathy", "dissonant cultural premises" can fail to help us communicate effectively when we are actually immersed in a foreign culture. So, just as raw experience is not enough, we can also demonstrate that the most precisely honed concepts may be of little practical value in guiding action.

In order to make concepts useful in practice we must forge an ego-involved link between the concept and the concrete situation as viewed by the participants. One's own emotional response to situations must be recognized as symptoms or indicators of the concept. Forging this link involves the processes of logical induction, identification and self-confrontation.

(1) Logical induction: Many of the words so frequently used in connection with the cross-cultural setting are very vague to their users because the referent is not clear or the examples used to illustrate the concept are so few or the setting is so stereotyped that the user is unable to apply the concept to any other situation than the one "textbook illustration". The aim of this series of MINI-DRAMAS is to link a wide variety of specific experiences in concrete situations with the same basic, abstract concepts of communication.

(2) Identification: The concrete examples which illustrate the concept must include persons with whom the listener can identify to help him realize that "this could also happen to me!" All of the MINI-DRAMAS have North American characters with whom the listener can identify.

(3) Self-confrontation: Since the situations are taken from real instances of cross-cultural miscommunication, the listener will usually identify with the North American characters in the MINI-DRAMA and make the same incorrect assumptions. This gives the listener the opportunity to demonstrate to himself his own tendency to jump at false conclusions because of his culturally determined silent assumptions.

These three factors may be thought of as part of a process of self-confrontation in which a person recognizes himself as responding to a problematical situation in terms of his cultural background rather than in terms of his unique personality or in terms of some world wide set of premises about various action situations.

To encourage this recognition of the "cultural-self" we must avoid any threatening interaction between the learner, the materials and the discussion leader which might cause a defensive avoidance of this self-confrontation. Therefore, it is important that the discussion leader establish a non-judgemental atmosphere to encourage a free expression of this "cultural-self" by the group. The MINI-DRAMA itself helps with the identification process in a non-threatening way, the tape-recorded SLIDE-LECTURE concentrates on explaining the events and logically connecting them with a theoretical model. This leaves the self-confrontation phase mainly to the group discussion which takes place between the MINI-DRAMA and the SLIDE-LECTURE.

Discussion Leader's General Strategy

The general strategy of alternation between listening to a MINI-DRAMA scene and having a group discussion will help the group experience the same thought processes which led the Americans in the MINI-DRAMA to miscommunicate with the Colombians. As each scene unfolds there is an increasing opportunity for the listeners to become aware of the errors in their original assumptions which led to their false conclusions. There should be a growing realization that neither the Americans in the MINI-DRAMA nor in the discussion group failed to solve the problem because of any unique weakness as individuals but that as "carriers" of the North American cultural patterns they inevitably began with inappropriate assumptions about their role as a customer in the bank.

To achieve this basic insight into the nature of cross-cultural communication, the Discussion Leader should observe the following points:

(1) Avoid any remark when introducing the MINI-DRAMA or in the discussion which would give any hint that the problem is basically one of communication! Let them discover this themselves!

(2) Help the group to freely express their thoughts, feelings, interpretation and puzzlements about what they heard in the MINI-DRAMA.

To accomplish this you must-

(a) Accepting Attitude: Avoid expressions of judgemental attitudes toward either the characters in the MINI-DRAMA or the participants in the discussion.

(b) Broad Scope Questions: Use questions which are broad in scope to avoid giving clues to what they should look for.

(c) Neutral Probes: Use neutral probes which encourage free expression and elaboration without leading a person to the "right" answer.

(3) Summarizing: At the end of each discussion try to briefly summarize some of the most salient reactions of the group to the scene just discussed. The sequence of your summarization of the five discussions will help the participants become more conscious of their initial errors and their growing awareness of the real nature of the problem.

In order to help you successfully carry out step (2) above which is the heart of your role as discussion leader, let us be more specific about avoidance of judgemental attitudes and the use of broad-scope questions followed by neutral probes.

Non-judgemental attitudes

Rather than expressing attitudes of approval or disapproval of either the Colombian or American characters in the MINI-DRAMA or of the expressions of the participants in the discussion, you should express an attitude of vital interest in the views, feelings, and interpretations of the discussants regardless of their nature. You must guard against showing impatience with the discussants because they can't see the problem.

Using broad-scope questions

Particularly at the beginning of each discussion, you must be sure to use broad-scope questions to open the discussion without suggesting the proper diagnosis of the situation. By comparing the broader-scope with the narrower-scope questions below, you can readily see why the latter might short-circuit the discussants' discovery process.

BROADER-SCOPE	NARROWER-SCOPE
(1) What are your impressions of this scene	(1) Is there conflict in this scene?
(2) What is happening in this scene?	(2) Is there any miscommunication in this scene?
(3) What do you think about this scene?	(3) Does this sound like the kind of thing that could really happen?
(4) What are the feelings of the people interacting in this situation?	(4) Do the Americans have a positive or negative feeling toward the Colombian in this situation?
(5) Why does the Colombian customer do what he does?	(5) Does the Colombian customer feel he has been wronged by the American?

In each of the pairs of questions above, the narrower-scope question can be answered by one word, usually "yes" or "no". This tends to inhibit free expression by prematurely demanding specific judgements from the discussants. Furthermore, by narrowing the scope of the question, we suggest the nature of the problem through clues which were not available to the Americans in the MINI-DRAMA. You might be raising questions which would not yet occur to the discussant for the same reasons they did not occue to the Americans in situ. For example, "Is there any miscommunication in this scene?" would focus the discussant's mind on a problem which never occurred to the Americans or the Colombians in Bogota on their first encounter. Similarly, the question "Does the Colombian customer feel he has been wronged by the American?" did not occur to the Americans in the scene nor does it often occur to Americans listening to the MINI-DRAMA.

Of course the use of only a few broad-scope questions will not necessarily keep the discussion momentum high. To build and maintain momentum (without unduly restricting the direction of the discussion or suggesting solutions to the problem) you must follow the broad questions with neutral probes at the appropriate time.

Using neutral probes

A probe, as distinct from a question, is any kind of verbal or non-verbal activity (by a discussion leader or interviewer) which aims at obtaining a more complete and adequate answer to a previous question. A probe is neutral in form and content if it is aimed at merely encouraging a person to give more information without specifying or implying what information is relevant. The most neutral is the "silent probe" in which the leader listens with interest but refrains from immediately filling the silence with another question or verbal probe. This interested silence is very effective but can be overdone to where it becomes an "embarrassing silence".

Another type of neutral probe is a simple statement of encouragement which indicates that the conversation or discussion should continue in whatever direction seems most relevant to the speaker. This form of probe includes such verbal activity as "Uh huh", "I see", "That's putting it clearly", "Very interesting", "I never thought of that", "Go on", "What else did you notice?"

A slightly less neutral probe is one which directly asks for elaboration or clarification of something which has been mentioned. This would include such statements as: "Can you tell us some more about that idea?" "Is there anything you would like to add to that?" "Could you spell that out a bit?" "Why do you say that?" "Why did he do that?" "What makes you feel that way about it?" "How do you know that?"

Of course if the discussion gets outside the general boundaries of the broad-scope questions used to initiate the discussion, then the leader must be more directive and less neutral by bringing the discussion back into relevant territory. However, it is important to build up momentum and spontaneity in the discussion first and then guide it into the relevant channels when this becomes necessary.

Remember it is not your function as the discussion leader to maneuver the discussants into finding the right answers but to encourage them to demonstrate their own modes of thought in their attempts to recognize, analyze, and solve the problem. The "right answers" from the cross-cultural research upon which the MINI-DRAMA is based will be given in the tape-recorded Slide Lecture which follows the discussion.

Discussion Guide - Scene 1

In the discussion of the first scene your general objective is to help the members of the group demonstrate the degree of their awareness of the general nature of the problem depicted in that scene. To what extent do they realize, suspect, or hypothesize that the basic problem is one of communication rather than of the personality characteristics of either the Colombians or the Americans?

The discussion guide below cannot be used in a rigid, mechanical way! The broad questions can be rephrased to fit your own style if you wish, but they should be kept broad in scope. It is also highly probable that the order of the questions will need to be changed to accomodate to the direction taken by the group. The "objectives" in the second column are not to be confused with questions to be asked directly. They simply indicate the major purpose of the broad questions in that set. These objectives are to be met by following the broad question by neutral probes when they are needed to supply momentum and direction to the discussion. You should study the questions and objectives carefully before leading a discussion and then be flexible in your questioning and probing while keeping the objectives firmly in mind.

B R O A D Q U E S T I O N S	O B J E C T I V E S
(1) Any comments or impressions? (2) What was happening in the bank? (3) What can you say about the interaction between the Americans and Colombians?	Discover the extent to which the group is aware (a) that there is conflict, (b) that there is miscommunication.
(4) What sorts of feelings are being generated in the interaction? (5) How did Jim feel about the Colombian customer? Why? (6) Why did the Colombian customer act the way he did? (7) What conclusion can be drawn about this particular Colombian?	Discover awareness of (a) the tension in the situation, (b) the possibility that the Colombian might feel wronged. To discover the extent to which they accept the American's view of the Colombian.

(8)	Was there anything in this situation which might interfere with Jim's ability to accurately <u>observe</u> what is happening with him?	Are they aware that the Americans were focusing most of their attention on each other?
(9)	Was there anything in the situation which might interfere with Jim's ability to accurately <u>interpret</u> the motivation of the Colombian?	Are they aware of the possibility of mis-communication being based upon conflicting assumptions?
(10)	What additional information would you like to better understand the situation?	Are they aware of the need to know what was intended by the <u>Colombian</u> and how he interpreted the American's words and actions? Are they aware that they might now know what a customer is expected to do in a bank in Colombia?

<u>Summarization</u>: Try to accurately reflect the current state of the group's diagnosis of the problem as they see it, how this diagnosis developed (if it did) through the course of the discussion, how sure they feel of the various diagnoses and the kinds of evidence (if any) which had been used to support the diagnosis. Then go on immediately to Scene 2.

Discussion Guide - Scene 2

The discussions of Scenes 2 through 5 should each be much shorter than the discussion of Scene 1 which contained all of the original event talked about by characters in the subsequent scenes. Also, you can use more focused questions as suggested in the Guide below. Again, the questions supplied in the Guide may be altered or omitted to fit what has already been brought out in the discussion.

The discussion of Scene 2 should move ahead to determine whether the discussants realize that the crucial fact in the minds of the Americans in the scene was that the Colombian went ahead and gave his check to the teller even though he knew that the American had not yet received his money. There is no need, at this point, to explore the logical relationship between that crucial fact and the conclusion. This can be done in the discussion after Scene 3.

B R O A D Q U E S T I O N S	O B J E C T I V E S
(1) Did any of the Americans disagree with Jim's conclusion that the Colombian customer was rude?	Are discussants aware of the lack of disagreement among the Americans?
(2) What was the crucial fact which led to the conclusion that the Colombian customer was rude?	IT SHOULD BE CLEARLY ESTABLISHED IN THE DISCUSSION THAT THE AMERICANS CONCLUDED THAT THE COLOMBIAN WAS RUDE BECAUSE HE GAVE HIS CHECK TO THE TELLER KNOWING THAT THE AMERICAN HAD NOT YET RECEIVED HIS MONEY.
(3) Is there any evidence that there is some cross-cultural misunderstanding?	Do any of the discussants realize that the fact that Jim had the same problem before at the bank might be a clue that there is some cultural barrier operating?
(4) Does the fact that the Colombian realized what he was doing logically lead to the conclusion that all Colombians are rude? That this particular Colombian was rude? Why or why not?	Is there any awareness yet that the conclusion also involves a silent assumption?
(5) Is there any reason for the Colombian to think Jim was rude even before he spoke?	To establish the lack of awareness that the Americans' motives are being misinterpreted.

Discussion Guide - Scene 3

This is the first time the Colombian point of view is expressed in the MINI-DRAMA. It is highly unlikely that many discussants would have thought of the possibility that the Colombians were considering the Americans rude in the same situation before hearing the teller's point of view in Scene 3.

Here the general aim is to help the discussants become aware that the conclusions of both the Americans and the Colombians are not deduced from the observed facts alone but that certain silent assumptions are also involved. Since the basic unstated assumptions about the expected behavior of a bank customer are different for Americans and Colombians, then different conclusions (judgements, interpretations) may be derived from the same objective fact. Thus, the same objective event is considered polite behavior by the American and rude by the Colombian. There is no evidence of the exact nature of the Colombians' silent assumptions until Scene 5, but now is the time to develop the awareness of their possible existence.

You can be more specific in your questions and less neutral in your probes to help the discussants realize that there are probably conflicting silent assumptions acting as barriers to communication between the Americans and Colombians.

QUESTIONS	OBJECTIVES
(1) Why were we not aware before this that the Colombians considered Jim to be acting rudely?	We were concentrating on the Americans' account which led to trying to explain the Colombians' "rude" behavior.
(2) For the Colombians, what was the crucial fact which made Jim rude in their eyes?	He stood in front of the window until he got his money.
(3) Would an American draw the same conclusion from this fact about Jim?	No! This is correct behavior in the U. S.
(4) How can the same objective fact lead to a different conclusion?	Fact is interpreted according to certain assumptions.
(5) Do we know for sure why standing in front of the teller's window waiting for your money is considered rude by the Colombians?	No! There is no conclusive evidence of what expectation is violated.
(6) Why didn't the interviewer probe further to discover why this act is seen as rude?	Since she was Colombian, the conclusion was obvious because she shared the same silent assumption as the teller.

Discussion Guide - Scene 4

This discussion which interrupts the interview depicted in scenes 4 and 5 can be relatively short.

QUESTIONS	OBJECTIVES
(1) What is the concept which seems to have a different meaning for the Colombian and the American in this scene?	"Taking a turn".
(2) Could the problem have been avoided by a good Spanish-English dictionary which gave a more precise definition of the Spanish equivalent of "taking a turn"?	No. Because specific institutionalized forms of "taking turns" would vary from situation to situation.
(3) If you were interviewing the Colombian, what would you try to do next?	Find out what "taking your turn" means in a check-cashing situation.

Discussion Guide - Scene 5

QUESTIONS	OBJECTIVES
(1) What are some of the most important differences between the Americans' and the Colombians' assumptions about the check-cashing situation which acted as barriers to cross-cultural communication through either words or deeds?	Write a list of assumptions on the blackboard as they are suggested. These can prepare the way for the explanation of the Syllogistic Model of Cross-Cultural Communication on the tape-recorded SLIDE-LECTURE.

Summarize: Review how the group progressed in their understanding of the basic nature of the problem as the information was augmented by each successive scene of the MINI-DRAMA.

Introduce the taped lecture: "Now we will hear an explanation of some of the general concepts illustrated by this MINI-DRAMA and some of the practical implications for other cross-cultural situations."

Text of the Tape-Recorded Slide-Lecture

CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER IN A LATIN AMERICAN BANK

Text of Tape-Recorded Slide-Lecture

Citizens of the United States of America have more opportunities than any other nationality to make friends or enemies around the world through direct face-to-face interaction. Hundreds of thousands of Americans abroad with the Armed Forces, with the Peace Corps, with business and industry, or as exchange students, missionaries or tourists repeatedly cash checks in foreign banks. So this cross-cultural encounter in a Latin American bank is not just an isolated incident!

The amount of ill-will which can be generated on the world scene in an apparently simple and harmless act such as cashing a check is more than we like to imagine. If by some miracle we could set up an international electronic feedback system which would ring a bell in the White House every time some American abroad angered a host-country national by his behavior in a bank, our President would get very little sleep. For three or four days at the end of each month the White House would vibrate all through the day and night.

(Ding, dong, bong, gong, tinkle, jingle, to indicate bells from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.)

A disproportionate number of these electronic reports would come from Africa, Asia and Latin America because in these areas of the world the banking system is basically different from the system in the United States.

Contrary to popular opinion, most cross-cultural miscommunication is not due to the lack of goodwill or some peculiar insensitivity on the part of the individuals involved in the interaction. Of course, every culture has its insensitive and crude individuals, but this was definitely not the problem in the case just illustrated in the MINI-DRAMA. Instead, we found repeatedly in our research on cross-cultural communication

that meaning is not contained in either the actions or words alone. The actions or words constitute the message which must still be interpreted by the receiver in the context of the situation in which the interaction is taking place. The most relevant elements in the situational context are the participants' silent assumptions about the roles, relationships, and styles of interaction appropriate to that situation. Without agreement on these assumptions, the same message, verbal or nonverbal, can have two different meanings. This was the problem illustrated in the MINI-DRAMA.

We have learned that in Bogotá, it is assumed that the customer will walk to the teller directly, hand him the check, step back away from the window, wait to hear his name called, then return to the teller's cage to get his money. Very simple when we know the rules of the game. In the context of these rules, the Colombians' conversation made sense. The Colombian interviewer said that if each customer stood in line and stayed at the window until he received his cash, this would make the check-cashing procedure very inefficient.

As North Americans we have learned to associate lining up for services with orderliness, discipline, efficiency and democracy. It is inconceivable to us that a bank could give more efficient service to customers who do not line up to take turns in receiving their money. Yet this is true. The concept of the line was so firmly implanted in the minds of the North Americans that they would report in all candor that they stood in line when actually there was no line to stand in. What looks like a group of people around the teller's window both to a camera and to the Colombians lo s like a line pushing its way through a group to the North Americans.

The important point here is that many of the differences between two cultures in the appropriate patterns of face-to-face interaction are due to differences in the larger institutional structure of which the interaction is a part. The interaction between customer and teller in cashing a check in a particular bank is a part of the larger nation-wide banking system. The bank customer in any culture rarely knows the whole system but he must learn at least those patterns of behavior relevant to his particular role in the system. The banking system in Latin America is totally different in its structure from the system in the United States. Not only must the customer act differently, but also the teller, the bookkeeper, the manager, the board of directors, the guard, the stockholders, and the government officials - all must act differently to make the system function.

Unconsciously, the North American assumes that the banking procedures work so that the customers should receive their cash in the same order they give their checks to the teller. This is true in the United States because the teller himself usually makes the decision to cash a particular check or not. The Colombian teller can never make this decision alone. Instead, he verifies that the check is properly made out, that is has been endorsed, and then he passes it along to others who determine whether there are funds to cover the check. They deduct the amount of the check from the account and then record the new balance on the monthly statement sheet. This whole bookkeeping operation is completed efficiently with modern office machines before the customer receives his cash. This system makes it impossible for an account to be overdrawn. Latin American bank tellers find it incredible that North American bankers would actually let their tellers hand out cash first

and then do the bookkeeping later only to discover that some accounts are overdrawn.

Yet, in the U. S. system, there is no foolproof way to avoid overdrawing an account at a particular bank because checks charged against that account may be cashed at other banks then routed via a clearing house to the bank holding the account. So, even though a bank can determine whether there are funds to cover a check when it is presented at their own teller's window, they could discover later that the account had been overdrawn by a check which was being cashed at another bank. This cannot happen in Latin America because checks must be cashed at the bank holding the account against which it was issued. There is no clearing house arrangement between banks. This makes it inconvenient for a person who has received payments in checks drawn upon several different banks, because he must go to each of the banks in turn to cash the corresponding check.

Of course, not all cultural patterns of face-to-face behavior are so directly articulated with some fixed institutional structure. For example, the ritualistic behavior in forms of address, forms of introduction, greetings, salutations and after-dinner small talk do not have an obvious functional connection with a large organizational pattern. Yet, when we systematically studied North Americans involved in the daily chores of living or in trying to get some task accomplished in cooperation with the Latin Americans, we discovered that much of the confusion and miscommunication was related to cross-cultural differences in organizational structures in which the North American was participating. These structures (and their accompanying value system) form an important part of the silent context in which the actions and words of the other person are interpreted.

Such familiar institutions as the barbershop, the taxi, a stop sign, the matriculation process in a university, the card catalog in the library, the telephone book, the meat market, the traffic rules, the use of the family television set, the family breakfast, body position at the dinner table, smiling between the sexes, the personal naming system, the table of contents in a book, asking a girl for a date, or taking a bath - all these were problematical to the North Americans and under certain conditions led to miscommunication, confusion and even hard feelings between North Americans and Latin Americans.

It is important to note that this is not the picture given directly by the North Americans. When directly asked if they had any communication problems they could rarely report any - yet their free-flowing accounts of their experiences were filled with symptomatic results of miscommunication. The symptoms took the form of humorous accounts of the Colombians' inconsistent behavior, or rebellious remarks about the arbitrary restrictions of the host family, or speculations about the personality defects of the particular Colombians with whom they were in conflict at the moment. But even more frequent was the situation in which the Colombians were suffering from the behavior of their North American guests who were oblivious to the fact that there was any misunderstanding.

We can shrug our shoulders and say "So what? Let's not make a big thing of it! After all, they can't expect us to know all about their culture before we have had a chance to learn from direct experience." We may feel that they should make some allowances for the fact that we are foreigners, but the basic problem is that they don't know when our behavior is due to ignorance and when it is due to an attitude of rudeness or arrogance. For example, there are a few rare Colombians who

would stand in front of the teller's window until they received their money and they would in fact be rude people!

We have gathered first-hand evidence that the cumulative effect of these misunderstandings was unfortunately very great. For example, when we had Colombian interviewers talk to over 100 Colombians who had been in daily contact with North American Peace Corps Trainees and with undergraduate students from over 30 colleges and universities in the United States, we found that 65% of these Colombians felt that the North Americans were "generally thoughtless of others". Also, 63% said that the North Americans "think they are superior!", and 52% felt that the North Americans did not "care about their reputation among Colombians!"

These attitudes were developed after from two to six months of daily contact with the North Americans. They had also gained positive images of North Americans. For example, 98% said the North Americans "rarely arrived late for an appointment", 92% agreed that they "are generally people you can trust", 90% said "in general they are very honest."

Unfortunately, to be punctual, trustworthy and honest is not enough to open up opportunities to socialize and collaborate with the Latin Americans if they think we are also "thoughtless of others" and "feel that we are superior". Some of the less tactful respondents to the interviews volunteered such words as "arrogant", "crude", "peasant-like".

We might argue that no great harm is done if the North Americans don't have prior information on how the system works since anyone but the most insensitive person could simply observe and imitate the Colombian customers' behavior. Our actual observations of Americans in this situation has shown this assumption to be overly optimistic. We tend to blame the particular North Americans for having some personality

defect rather than appreciating the cultural nature of the problem. We know that in this situation most of the Peace Corps Trainees did eventually discover how the check-cashing system worked; but none of them avoided the effects of their North American assumptions the first time and many still had not discovered it after the second attempt to cash a check. I actually met Americans who had been in Bogotá for years who had not yet discovered how bank customers were supposed to behave. Unfortunately, it was not necessary for all members of a group to persist in some act interpreted as "rude" to give them that reputation among the Colombians. The initial conflict involving only a few Americans is enough to give that situation a negative charge for some time to come.

We discovered several reasons why highly intelligent and well-meaning people did not immediately recognize either the problem or its solution.

First was the false appearance of familiarity. The North American was surprised to find that the bank looked very much like a modern bank in the United States complete with IBM equipment and a physical layout which was very familiar. This reinforced his assumption that it also functioned according to the same rules. Here we see a non-linguistic cultural pattern functioning just as a false cognate does in the linguistic area. It is easy for the North American to assume, for example, that embarazada means embarrassed - so when a North American girl means to say "I'm embarrassed!", she actually tells the Latin American that she is pregnant. True, there may be some overlap in meaning, but it is certainly not the same condition.

This is part of the general problem caused by our tendency to assume that things which look alike are going to function alike. I have sometimes felt that we might get along better with a Latin American middle

class person if he wore some exotic costume like a turquoise turban to warn us that his mind does not assume the same values and beliefs as our own. The point is that we must be alert for visual as well as verbal false cognates!

Another reason the North Americans didn't immediately discover their error in the bank was that they were often so involved with another American that their attention was diverted from accurately observing what was going on about them. This was illustrated in the MINI-DRAMA in which Jim and Bob were so busy making comments about their previous experiences or about immediate observations such as the remarks about the transistor radio that they did not concentrate on the on-going pattern of interaction. There was a strong tendency for Colombians to become "invisible" to the North American when he was interacting with another North American.

A third distraction was the novelty of certain stimuli which are irrelevant to the interaction requirements in the situation. For example, the fact that the bank guard carried a rifle or sub-machine gun rather than a pistol was of great interest to the North American but was irrelevant to getting a check cashed in that situation.

A fourth complicating factor was that it was difficult to understand the conversations between the Colombians themselves in order to make sense out of the total pattern of their words and behavior. This was not only because the Trainees did not have a perfect command of Spanish, but conversations in any language are difficult to understand when we are not spoken to directly, the speaker's back is turned, he mumbles in a sloppy fashion, or the level of the background noise is high. Actually, the Colombians themselves as non-participant observers often could not

always hear the conversations accurately but they would usually correctly guess what was being said because they understood the patterns of interaction in the bank and knew the variety of phrases usually spoken by customers and tellers. Without knowing the context of the situation, many of the lines would be unintelligible to the Colombians under these conditions. In dramatistic terms we can say that if we know the plot of the play it is easier to understand the lines, and if we understand the lines it is easier to discover the plot.

A fifth factor sometimes interfering with some North Americans' discovery of the cultural pattern was their prejudice against Colombians. This prejudice could be against foreigners in general, against Latin Americans, against Colombians, or only against what the North Americans believed to be the Colombians' personality traits as manifested in specific situations. Frequently, a North American had had a previous experiences with Colombians' behavior in lining up at a bus stop or at a theater box office. He was correct in assuming that there was supposed to be a line in some of these situations, and he might have been shocked by what he perceived to be the undemocratic behavior of the middle and upper class teenagers who feel perfectly free to butt in ahead of any maid who has been sent to buy tickets. This negative attitude, developed in his observations of the theater line, sometimes automatically supplied an explanation of the Colombian behavior in the bank, which was that "the Colombians are Colombians - what do you expect?", rather than searching for the real cause of the confusion.

A sixth source of confusion was the North American's insecurity with his use of Spanish. When what he heard did not make sense, he simply assumed that he had not heard correctly. When he said something to the

Colombian which brough an unexpected response he often thought he had used incorrect Spanish or that his accent was unintelligible, when in fact the problem was that the Colombian was listening in an entirely different context. Thus the North American's anxiety about his language fluency often prevented him from suspecting the non-linguistic sources of miscommunication.

A seventh basis for confusion is that the Latin Americans often perceived that the North American did not understand what he was doing or saying so they try to adjust to this. They would make an exception for the North American as a guest in their country and never give him any clues that he was behaving in an inappropriate manner. However, this often resulted in a cumulative resentment on the part of some Colombians, like the bank customers, who did not understand the North American's problem, while other Colombians, like the bank teller, continually made exceptions in order to keep the North American's business. We discovered many instances in which the Colombians were making special arrangements to accommodate the North American who was completely unaware of this.

The final, and perhaps most important, factor preventing the quick discovery of the silent assumptions in the foreign situation was simply the North American's failure to realize that these unstated assumptions governing the situation were so essential to the communication process. He tended to think of language and culture as separate entities. This is quite understandable in view of the fact that such an awareness is not essential to his everyday activities in his own culture. Then, when he contemplates being immersed in another culture he is primarily concerned with learning the foreign language. If he becomes interested in

the non-linguistic aspect of cross-cultural communication he finds that most of the writings available deal with the overt forms of non-verbal behavior which can be photographed or sound-recorded while the silent assumptions are covert, silent and invisible. The study of kinesics which includes gestures and body movements is much better established as is the study of paralinguistics which includes the tone of voice, rhythmical patterns and intonation patterns of speech. More recently, there is the study of proxemics which is concerned with the symbolic use of space in interpersonal relations. For example, Edward T. Hall's Silent Language illustrates the importance of cross-cultural differences in conversational distance, body contact, public space, and private space. Yet all of his "silent language" is visible language and therefore more easily attracts our attention. We have only begun to document the vital importance of these covert assumptions which are both silent and invisible in the concrete situation where they govern the meaning of the message.

This historically belated interest in the covert context of the situation is understandable. As recently as the early 1960's, a majority of the American government personnel abroad did not speak the language of the host country.

Moving from this position of relative cultural isolationism, which is understandable in historical perspective, we have made great strides in equipping Americans with foreign language skills. But, we have tended to assume that "if we can speak with foreigners, we can understand them". We are now entering a new era in which we are discovering that communication depends upon much more than language skill alone. As illustrated in the MINI-DRAMA, cross-cultural messages can result in miscommunication

because both the Colombian and the North American interpreted the meaning in the context of his own assumptions related to the situation at hand. When these assumptions conflicted, so did the interpretations of the message.

Another very important point illustrated in the MINI-DRAMA is that if we want to <u>discover</u> the silent assumptions relevant to a given interaction situation, we must use a methodological strategy which will not be confused by the very source of miscommunication it is trying to study. For this reason we cannot discover the relevant assumptions of the foreign culture by only interviewing Americans in that cultural setting. Nor can we have the cross-cultural interaction observed by only Americans. This strategy adds error upon error. Nor can we use only members of the host-culture as interviewers and observers. Even though we sent Colombians to interview Colombians regarding their interaction with Americans, often the interviewer would stop just short of getting the respondent to verbalize the relevant assumption because it seems obvious to both interviewer and respondent. The Colombian respondent would be highly suspecious of any Colombian interviewer who would ask, for example: "Why do you think it is rude to stand at the teller's window until you receive your money?" This would be equivalent to one American asking another: "Why do you think it is rude to cut in at the head of the line at the teller's window?" To overcome this problem we relied upon the Colombian interviewers to discover which of the American's specific <u>actions</u> or <u>words</u> violated the set of assumptions appropriate to the situation and then let the American interviewer interview the Colombian interviewer to discover which unspoken <u>assumptions</u> were violated by these words or actions.

Once we discover the function of the silent assumptions in cross-cultural miscommunication, what can we do about it? How can we apply this knowledge to improving face-to-face communication between people of different nations?

First, we can learn some of the silent assumptions relevant to certain interaction situations in a particular foreign culture. This we have already done for many situations in which North Americans interacted with Latin Americans in Bogota. It is not practical to have a bi-national research team analyze each and every situation in which Americans might interact while abroad. But, we can set up criteria for selecting the most useful situations for study if we wish to expand our knowledge by further research in this area.

Second, we can go beyond discovering specific dissonant patterns of assumptions by developing a general conceptual model of how these dissonant assumptions lead to miscommunication. This model, derived from many concrete cases, can help to sensitize us to the general nature of the problem and make us alert for clues which occur in cross-cultural situations which have not already been analyzed and described for us in advance. This sensitizing model can help us make our own.

Third, we can learn some of the skills of observations and questioning in a way to discover the silent assumptions relevant to interaction situations in which we are participating or simply observing. These skills should include the art of self-observation, recognition of both the objective and subjective symptoms of miscommunication, the art of asking questions in a way which avoids our own restricting assumptions, and the art of listening analytically for the unstated silent assumptions.

This proposed series of Cross-Cultural Communication Packets aims at combining all three of these approaches as a practical strategy for surmounting some of the major non-linguistic barriers in situations where Americans are in face-to-face communication with foreigners abroad. While sharing some of the relevant cultural facts obtained in our cross-cultural research project, we will repeatedly illustrate a conceptual framework we call the syllogistic model of meaning and share what we have learned about some of the basic skills needed to discover the relevant cultural patterns for ourselves and provide a depth of understanding of the nature of human communication which will be useful to us at home or abroad.

We began this presentation with the sound of bells rung by a mythical electronic feedback system triggered by the cross-cultural clashes with the American assumptions regarding the operation of a bank. What would happen if we extended our electronic reporting system to include conflicts caused by other incorrect assumptions made by North Americans in Colombia?

Here are some additional assumptions we discovered to block communication between well-meaning, intelligent North Americans and equally qualified Colombians. For example:

(1) "If the host family will not allow the maid to wash the dinner dishes in warm water, they certainly wouldn't like me to take a hot shower at night!"

Wrong! You are perfectly welcome to take a hot bath at night.

(2) "One of the duties of the maid is to make the beds in the house."

Wrong! Not even the señora would ask the maid to make a guest's bed.

(3) "Even though Latin Americans all have two surnames, you can be sure that the father, mother and children in a family will all have the same pair of surnames."

Wrong! They never have the same pair of surnames.

(4) "When alphabetizing a Spanish name in Latin America the parts of the name are considered in the same priority as they appear on the line in any alphabetical list."

Wrong again! This is never the case in Colombia.

(5) "After you take a bath in your Colombian home, you should always hang the bath towel in the bathroom."

Wrong again! You should take it to your room or hang it in the sun on the patio!

(6) "All members of a respectable middle-class family usually eat breakfast together."

Wrong. They rarely ever eat breakfast together!

(7) "It is always correct to pay the taxi driver the amount shown on the taxi meter plus a tip."

Wrong! This is true unless you are leaving the international airport, or unless it is Sunday, or a weekday after 9 p.m., or a holiday.

(8) "Maria is always a girl's name and is never used for males."

What could be a safer assumption? But it is wrong anywhere in Hispanic America.

(9) "When eating dinner on a formal occasion, the proper place for the left hand when not being used in eating is in the lap."

Wrong. This will arouse an uneasy feeling in your Colombian host.

(10) "If a man wants to make a good impression on a government official, he should smile when he introduces himself to the female receptionist."

Wrong! That is precisely what you should not do!

(11) "Even though Colombians and other Latin Americans have two surnames, I have only one surname since I am a North American."

Wrong! You have two but it is customary to use only one in the United States. But, you'd better break the habit while in Latin America.

(12) "When carrying on a conversation with any Latin American, our faces should be much closer than in a similar conversation with a North American."

Sometimes this can get you into a lot of trouble.

(13) "A good professor will assign approximately two hours of outside work for each hour of class."

Wrong! An American Fulbright Professor was fired for this in Bogota.

(14) "Paper matches are given gratis to cigarette customers."

You may think so, but don't be surprised if the clerk shouts "thief" as you leave.

(15) "You should remove the drawer from a library card catalog when using it."

Why not? It allows you to stay out of the way of others who want to use the catalog. Yet, one American researcher had his library privileges taken away for trying it.

What if we connected the miscommunications caused by all of these assumptions to our mythical electronic reporting system? We have hard evidence that the bell would ring from two to four times per day for each of the American guests in a Colombian home particularly in the early weeks of his stay.

The most encouraging result of our research was in finding that a large proportion of the misunderstandings could have been eliminated by an operational understanding of the silent assumptions governing the behavior of the Colombians. An additional proportion could have been eliminated by sensitizing the North American to the basic idea that communication depends upon much more than language alone.

We think that you agree that this analysis of a cross-cultural encounter in a Latin American bank opens up a fascinating field of communication theory which has obviously important practical implications for anyone trying to get a job done in a foreign culture. Further understanding of the function of these silent assumptions will help us roll back another of the barriers to more successful cross-cultural communication.

TEST

This test may be used as a pre-test, post-test, or both. It can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction by measuring the change in the group's mean score before and after the use of the Cross-Cultural Communication Packet. This can be done anonymously unless individual scores are needed for grading purposes. A sample answer sheet is provided which can be duplicated. If large numbers of people are involved, the standard IBM electronically graded answer sheets could be used. Since this test has not yet been standardized with respect to reliability or validity, it is not to be considered as a precise measure. If frequency distributions can be made of the responses to each question, the discussion leader might want to have some discussion of those items where some confusion still remained in the post-test.

Although there are very important cultural differences between the nations of the world, there is also an international culture which is developing in connection with air travel, banking, taxis, telephone books and many other aspects of the urban industrial world.

Items (1) through (7) below describe some of the ways of operating a bank. Please indicate whether each of the items about banking is universal for all banks in the Western Hemisphere using the following key:

a - is universal
b - might be universal
c - is not universal

_____ (1) To cash a check, the customers must line up at the teller's window.

_____ (2) In cashing a check, the customer receives his cash in the same order he gives his check to the teller.

_____ (3) There are armed guards to protect the banks in large cities.

_____ (4) There is some way of eventually knowing if an account is overdrawn.

_____ (5) Anyone can cash a check drawn on another bank as long as he has positive identification and the account is not already overdrawn.

_____ (6) All the banks use the same size of check.

_____ (7) All the banks will exchange pesos for dollars or vice versa.

(8) In which of the following ways would there be the <u>greatest</u> difference between a bank in the United States and one in Latin America?

_____ (a) importance of preventing robbery

_____ (b) value placed upon efficiency

_____ (c) value placed upon esthetic quality of the interior

_____ (d) procedure for cashing a check

_____ (e) type of office equipment used

(9) Which of the following could be the subjective symptoms of communication failure in a cross-cultural conversation?

_____ (a) a general feeling of confusion

_____ (b) a feeling that the other person is untrustworthy

_____ (c) a feeling that the other person is rude

_____ (d) a feeling that the other person doesn't understand you

(10) Which of the following include all the necessary and sufficient conditions for accurate communication between two people from different cultures?

_____ (a) Both must be fluent in the same language.

_____ (b) They must share not only the language but also the meaning of the gestures.

_____ (c) In addition to language and gestures, they must share the meaning of the rhythmical and intonation patterns of speech.

_____ (d) No combination of the above will guarantee accurate communication.

(11) If a person goes abroad to live with a foreign family for three months, he could communicate quite well within a few weeks even if he arrived with no previous knowledge of the language. It has been shown that when we have to use a language to survive we can learn it rapidly without any formal instruction.

_____ (a) Strongly agree
_____ (b) Agree
_____ (c) Not sure
_____ (d) Disagree
_____ (e) Strongly disagree

(12) If a person goes abroad to live with a foreign family for three months, he could communicate quite well within a few weeks even though he arrived with fluency in the language but with no knowledge of the cultural patterns involved in the daily routine of living. He can easily pick up these customs if he is interested.

_____ (a) Strongly agree
_____ (b) Agree
_____ (c) Not sure
_____ (d) Disagree
_____ (e) Strongly disagree

Items (13) through (25) should be answered either true or false using the following key:

a - true
b - false

_____ 13. If an American is intelligent and normally sensitive socially, he will always know when he is failing to communicate in a conversation with a member of the host culture even though he may not know the cause of the failure.

_____ 14. Sometimes it would be impossible to understand what a foreigner means even if we had a perfect translation of what he is saying.

_____ 15. If we are not prejudiced against a foreigner, we have a better chance of communicating with him.

_____ 16. When an American is abroad, there is no danger of his miscommunicating with those members of the host culture with whom he has no verbal exchange.

_____ 17. Even though we don't always understand the customs governing the daily lives of people in a foreign country, this will not inhibit our ability to communicate with them if we are fluent in their language and make the effort.

_____ 18. If an American abroad is fluent in the foreign language, is intelligent, and has a strong desire to get along with the members of the host culture, he will not have any misunderstandings generated by his conversations with them.

_____ 19. Most Americans are ethnocentric in their attitudes toward other cultures.

_____ 20. If two cultures agree on specific values (efficiency, punctuality, safety, etc.) then they will have the same means to attain these ends since the means must fit the actual ends they serve.

_____ 21. Sometimes we cannot understand conversations we happen to overhear even though we can hear every word clearly.

_____ 22. Conversational fluency in a foreign language includes the spontaneous use of correct intonation patterns.

_____ 23. Words vary in meaning according to the situation in which they are used.

_____ 24. If we wish to analyze the nature of the communication problems encountered by Americans while they are abroad, we can obtain all of the essential information by observing Americans as they interact with members of the host country and by interviewing them while the experience is fresh in their minds.

_____ 25. A good way to verify specific customs of a foreign country is to ask several Americans who have actually directly experienced the situation we are interested in. Then, if all of them agree, we can be sure that we have an accurate picture of the custom in question.

ANSWER KEY

Cross-Cultural Encounter in a Latin American Bank

(1) C
(2) C
(3) A
(4) A
(5) C
(6) C
(7) C
(8) D
(9) A, B, C, D
(10) D
(11) D or E
(12) D or E
(13) B
(14) A
(15) A
(16) B
(17) B
(18) B
(19) A
(20) B
(21) A
(22) A
(23) A
(24) B
(25) B

To arrive at a total score, subtract 4 for each incorrect answer. For item (9) subtract 1 point for each of the letters omitted. Subtract the incorrects from a total possible score of 100. This gives a percentage score.

ANSWER SHEET

Name_____(if requested)

(1)_____

(2)_____

(3)_____

(4)_____

(5)_____

(6)_____

(7)_____

(8)_____

(9)_____

(10)_____

(11)_____

(12)_____

(13)_____

(14)_____

(15)_____

(16)_____

(17)_____

(18)_____

(19)_____

(20)_____

(21)_____

(22)_____

(23)_____

(24)_____

(25)_____